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Gov. Wolf Signs Executive Order Extending Mail Ballot Deadline in Six Counties to June 9

Harrisburg, PA – Amid a surge in mail-in ballots, the COVID-19 public health emergency and civil disturbances in six counties, Governor Tom Wolf today signed an executive order extending the deadline for county election offices in Allegheny, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties to receive absentee or mail-in ballots by mail to 5 p.m. June 9, 2020. The ballot must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, June 2, 2020. The deadline to hand deliver absentee or mail-in ballots remains 8 p.m. June 2, 2020.

“This is an unprecedented time for Pennsylvania and our nation as we face a major public health crisis and civil unrest during an election,” said Gov. Wolf. “Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and I want to ensure that voters can cast their ballot and that it is received in time.”

The six counties included in today’s executive order are part of a disaster emergency declaration the governor signed Saturday in response to civil unrest to provide all necessary assistance to the municipalities.

While the vast majority of counties have been able to process their applications and mail their ballots, the volume of applications in the six counties caused by the COVID-19 crisis combined with the recent civil disturbance make it necessary to extend the deadline for the counties to receive completed civilian absentee and mail-in ballots. Curfews, travel restrictions and other unforeseen circumstances have made returning ballots more difficult in these counties. The extension will help to ensure that voters in those counties are not disenfranchised through no fault of their own.

Mail-in ballots are new to Pennsylvania under [Act 77 of 2019](#), which Gov. Wolf signed last year as part of the state’s most sweeping election law improvements in 80 years. The law created the option of mail-in ballots with no excuse needed, along with later deadlines for voter registration and for returning mail-in and absentee ballots.

Nearly [1.8 million](#) Pennsylvania voters have applied for a mail ballot since the onset of COVID-19.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, in March the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed and Gov. Wolf signed [Act 12 of 2020](#), which rescheduled the primary election from April 28, 2020, to June 2, 2020, to reduce crowding at polling places and encourage voters to use mail-in ballots.

The last time an [executive order](#) was utilized to extend the deadline to return absentee ballots was in 2012 due to Hurricane Sandy.